



via pacis  
(the way of peace)  
Des Moines  
Catholic Worker Community  
Volume 1 number 12  
November, 1977

# On Hospitality

A few weeks ago our staff took to a farm house for an afternoon and a morning for some clarification of thought. Part of the discussion consisted of the future. So much has changed. We now have our second house. Condemned when we bought it, it has slowly been rehabilitated by many good people. At present, it is being painted and repairs are being made visible. It won't be long before we start filling it up with guests. We already have all the furniture we need and the Ligutti House is pretty much in living condition. Thank you to all the folks who helped in so many ways.

Tony from the Milwaukee Catholic Worker House is visiting us for a while. He's been a good kick and is helping with painting and is fixing up the first floor bathroom for us. Except for Ann who is on vacation for a week, the staff is all here in town. Changes are taking place again. Joe will be moving to an apartment on the east side and Mike and Ann will be moving to an apartment next door. In September, I was gone for three weeks visiting friends and Worker Houses around the Midwest, and it was good to see Sonny home from the slammer when I got back. Some of the staff are redefining their roles and most others are changing styles in one way or another (Don't let 'em fool ya). Good folks. What else can I say about what's been continued on p.11

# Fall Discussions

Part of the Catholic Worker tradition is the round table discussion where people join together to verbalize and clarify thoughts. The liturgy is celebrated every Friday at the house (713 Indiana, one block north of University) at 8 p.m., followed by a discussion.

November 11: Women in Parish Ministry; Sr. Mary Ann Foy.

November 18: Vietnamese in Des Moines; Sr. Pat Scherer.

November 25: The Catholic Worker Movement; the staff.

December 2: To be announced.

December 9: Political Oppression in Iran; the Iranian Student's Association of Ames.

December 16: The Israeli-Palestinian Dispute; Carol Stutzman of the American Friends Services Committee.

December 23: The Seven Prophecies of the Coming of Our Lord; Marion Kelley and Sr. Margaret Smith.

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# mobilization for SURVIVAL

When President Carter visited Des Moines October 21, he was greeted by well over a hundred demonstrators demanding the cancellation of the neutron bomb. Our demonstration, the first for the Iowa Mobilization for Survival, began on the evening of the 20th, when a vigil was begun. Throughout the daylight hours of the 21st, there was leafleting and street theatre in the downtown area of Des Moines.



Though a cloudburst damped our bodies, about 6,000 leaflets were handed out to Democrats attending a fund raiser at Veteran's Auditorium by members of the Mobilization. Another larger group of Mobilization members held signs in an area blocked off especially for us. Inside of the auditorium itself, six of us were able to get in a large sign bearing the message

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"NO NEUTRON BOMB," which was unfurled mid-way through Carter's speech and allowed to hang. During the actual talk, a petition bearing the names of close to 2,000 people was given to a Carter aide by Bishop Dingman. Finally, leaflets to people on what they as individuals could do to stop the neutron bomb were passed out to those leaving the auditorium. Press coverage was excellent. All agreed that the demonstration was a very good one, the best Des Moines had seen in years.

Because of the number of leaflets printed and a truly huge phone bill here at the house, I urge you to send what you can to the Iowa Mobilization for Survival, c/o the Des Moines Catholic Worker House.

As for the future. On November 13th at 3 p.m. at Knox United Presbyterian Church at 59th and Hickman here in Des Moines, the Iowa Mobilization for Survival will again meet. At this meeting, we hope to more fully organize the Mobilization and plan our winter and spring activities, which will center around the Burlington plant. (The plant in Burlington is one of the two in the United States where the H-bombs are put together.) At 6, a chili supper will be served, for a \$1.50 donation. And after supper the fun will begin, with music, dancing and just plain good talk lasting long into the night.

--Mike Smith

# Letters

Department of Theology  
Georgetown University  
Washington, D.C. 20057

Dear Editor,  
Congratulations on your September, 1977 edition of the Catholic Worker. The artwork of seven year old Bobby and the story of his uncle Frank Cordaro were vibrant with life at the same time they gave witness to the death all around us.

As you say, Frank is no ordinary person but a native son of Des Moines. His witness can not help influencing the many who know him in Des Moines. His influence spreads out across the country and the world when he takes a stand for truth about life and opposes the death that threatens us all from nuclear weapons.

I didn't meet Frank when he was here in Washington but I will look for the opportunity from now on. He is one of the prophets of our time and is giving a message that we all need to hear and



follow. Congratulations on being the vehicle of that message to all who read your fine paper.

Fraternally yours in Christ,  
Dick McSorley

Dear Frank,

Suspect that the 30 days came as something of a shock. No wonder! At the same time however, you'll be sustained by your faith and theology. "The disciples rejoiced that they were found worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus." (Acts).

Thought your courtroom statement very fine. And your whole demeanor. You reached the judge, and he retaliated like an unstable, petulant jerk. All this is a great credit to you. As the Bible tells us, the truth cuts and cuts deep.

We talked at length with Jacquee and Joe, and they left in good spirits. It was a consensus that coming here was a painful, yet rich experience for Jacquee. Which is to say, a great grace.

Courage, brother. The life of a Christian is not full unless she/he has been digested by the Beast. Your experience brings theology down to the concrete. With a jolt. But you have the wherewithal to make this the first of many great graces. I've always struggled to look on over 43 months in the slammer in that light. Because I know it's true. Peace of Christ, our love, admiration, Thanks.

Fraternally,  
Phil (Berrigan)      via pacis

## PRISON POEM #1

isolation...solitude...  
each man in his own cell  
filling his space; yet overflowing it  
the sun sets at the flick of the jailer's finger  
concrete and steel stand useless against the silence  
and one dim light  
keeps its vigil through the night  
brother breathing...overrested in sleep  
I can see them through the walls in my mind's eye  
wrapped in blankets, their swaddling clothes,  
against the cold air  
I can feel the shadows of steel bars  
lying heavy on them like many crosses  
We share the same dreams of physical freedom  
and we hear the same echoes...  
of slamming doors  
and the turning of keys, by our would-be fathers  
stern and unyielding  
day after night....  
night after day...  
hour by hour...  
each in his own time...but  
willing to share it  
with the old man who vomits into the toilet  
withdrawing from alcohol...  
with the young man who cries out to everyone  
as though they cannot hear...  
with the prisoner who tried to kill himself  
to hang from the bars which hold him...  
with the prisoner who has killed others  
with the prisoner who has stolen  
with the prisoner who lied  
with the prisoner falsely accused  
with the prisoner wrongly tried  
with the prisoner who works the kitchen  
with the prisoner who demands prisoners' time,  
that is not his to demand  
and with the prisoner who locks his brothers and sisters in cages  
We share

the same blood  
the same ashes  
the same life  
the same hope  
the same time...  
isolation....solitude...

--Steve Jacobs

# Caesar's Question and Jesus' Answer

When I see the man without work on the bum, I often ask myself, "why?" When I see the woman on the street afraid to go home for fear of being beaten up by her boyfriend, I ask myself, "why?"

In a Catholic Worker House of Hospitality, asking "why?" is about as traditional as dishing out a bowl of soup in a soup line. It is an integral part of the movement. We ask a wide range of questions: Why is there unemployment? Why do people have no place to stay? Why are people so violent with each other? Why are there not enough homes to live in? Why do people eat so poorly in this country? Why is education so poor for some citizens? Why is health care so expensive? Why do people pay more and get less? Why don't people own anything anymore but simply possess things on credit? Such questions are unending. However it is the point of view from which you ask the question that determines the answer.

Today, just as in former days, the dominant questions being asked are the questions of Caesar, i.e., the state, the bureaucracy, yes, even the institutional church. What is the problem? What are the statistics which prove there is a problem? What projects or programs can we create to solve the problem? How are the majority going to be reached? How much unemployment is necessary for a healthy economy? And so on.

Caesar's questions are posed in such a way that man is required to answer them through his own power. "We will create jobs through government programs." "We will create housing projects to give people homes." "We will make laws to protect property and secure peace." "We will create a Federal Food Regulatory Commission." "We

the rationalizations of Caesar's own questions and answers.

Caesar's questions allow for the whole host of half truths that have historically plagued mankind. The rationalization behind war is perhaps Caesar's greatest achievement. War is a necessary evil which weighed against certain perceived alternatives is a good. "If we



will pass laws for Equal Educational Opportunities." "We will develop a Welfare System to meet the needs of the folks who ain't making it in our system and we will exploit their needs to make our system work better by doling out to them just enough federal dollars to keep them consuming." Caesar's questions and answers for the poor and needy in our society keep them stagnant or make them progressively worse off than they were before. At the same time, those people who truly wish to help the poor are kept far away from them, their power is diffused by red tape, and they are lost in



don't clobber the other guy, he'll clobber us." "If we don't take to arms, our loved ones will be destroyed." "Existence under tyranny is no existence at all." Even the Church has joined Caesar to explain that in certain cases (those occasions that MY country deem fit) war is the only moral thing to do. "Our" war is a "just" war. The "Double Effect" theory: our act of violence will produce two effects--one bad and one good. The good from our act will far outweigh the bad, e.g., thirty-two years ago the atom bomb was dropped on the city of Hiroshima and at least 100,000 people were

killed in a few seconds, but the war ended. And so it goes until we reach the nuclear stand off of our own day. However, in our day both sides can destroy each other totally. Do Caesar's rationalizations make any sense now? How is it that the Churches have not joined together to outlaw all modern warfare, especially since all our medieval rationalizations no longer apply? How is it that when the Pope speaks to Catholics, he can initiate countless arguments centering around countless subjects, but when he speaks out against nuclear proliferation, his is merely a voice crying out in the wilderness?

I believe that much of the modern Christian's dilemma has its roots in the kind of questions being asked. The Jesus we see in scripture seems very strange and distant to us. We do not know how to read and pray over scripture. Therefore we find ourselves straining to make a strange Jesus answer our questions for us. Many well intentioned Christians try to answer Caesar's questions with this strange Jesus' answers and come up wanting.

The scriptural Jesus' answer calls for some very specific questions--questions rooted in God and Salvation History and the people of Israel. Jesus is the answer to the questions of the Old Testament, plus he is a new question in his own right.

There are givens in these questions--things that cannot be part of the questions. There is a God and we--all of us--are called to be his people. We do have a choice, yet what has happened, what is happening and what will happen is GRACED.

Our question now is how are we to respond to our God?--no longer a God "out there," but Emmanuel, "God with us!" Jesus has helped us refine the question by moving us from our "how" to his "Who?" (see Dietrich Bonhoeffer's Christ the Center).

"How?" is a dangerous question because it can so easily become a Caesar question--a question which allows human beings to have an answer of their own making. In Jesus we can no longer be misled into a Caesar question. The Jesus question is "Who do you say that I am?" (Mk. 8:27; Mt. 16:15; Lk. 9:20). Serious searching for our answer to this question will always keep us on the right track. When the question is "who?" we look for a person, not a program. We look for the person of Jesus rather than a doctrine. And the truth is no further than the person with whom we are in contact. Caesar will never see the truth in persons because he is asking the wrong question. It is no accident that at Jesus' trial Pilate asked Jesus, "What is truth?" (Jn. 18:38). Pilate, a local Caesar, asked "What is truth?" with TRUTH--the person of Jesus--standing right in front of him. Caesar will always be blind, and we cannot expect anything else since in Caesar "he" has become "it."

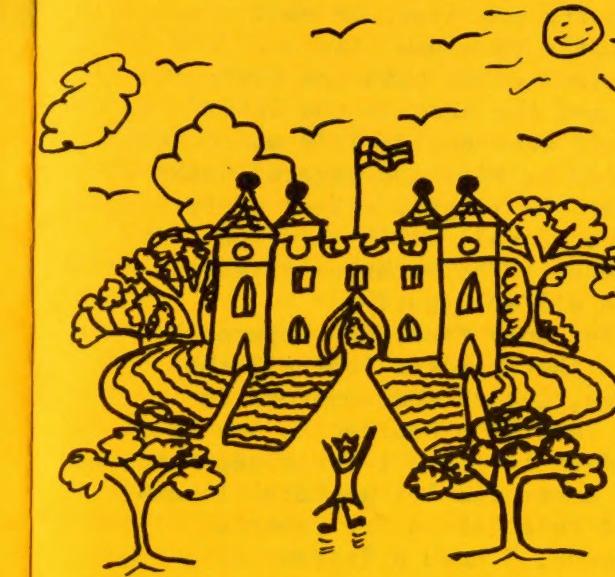
Today we need to ask the question, "Who is Jesus?" afresh in the light of the scriptures. This is not a task to be completed but an ongoing journey of personal encounter. Since Jesus is PERSON, then in all persons there is a Jesus (Mt. 25: 31-46). If our encounter with him is to be true it must be done in a relationship of brothers and sisters--not an "I--It" or "Staff--Client" or "Us--Them" or "Master--Slave" relationship.

If we keep the focus of our efforts in meeting others as brothers and sisters, many of Caesar's rationalizations fall apart. We do not give substandard housing to a sister. We do not give poor education to brothers and sisters. We do not keep our brothers unemployed. We do not allow our sister to die alone in the county home. We do not let children (and all children are our children) wait in over-crowded poor people's clinics to be treated inadequately. At least, if we call ourselves the People of God, we cannot let any of the above happen, especially if our needs are being met, and not do anything. The needs of the least are the needs of Jesus still suffering in our brothers and sisters, and still waiting to receive from us the simple, basic necessities of human life.

But we must remind ourselves constantly that Caesar's questions and answers for the poor and needy, indeed for any person, are no answers at all, since they involve no encounter with persons, no encounter with Jesus. Furthermore, if we see all people and relate

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# The Emperor's New Weapon



by Jacquee Dickey

Once upon a time, there was an emperor so tremendously fond of his castle that he spent all of his time there. He cared nothing for the theatre, or socializing with his friends--unless he could show off his castle, of course.

Most emperors have cooks, court jesters and wise mentors of counsel to serve them, but this emperor only hired interior decorators. He would send them off to foreign lands to gather brocaded silk for bedspread ruffles, or panther skins for throw rugs, or pastel cut glass creamers to serve with morning coffee.

In the city where the emperor lived, it was always lively and there were many visitors. One day, an imposter came. He said he was an unemployed interior decorator. The emperor hired him November, 1977

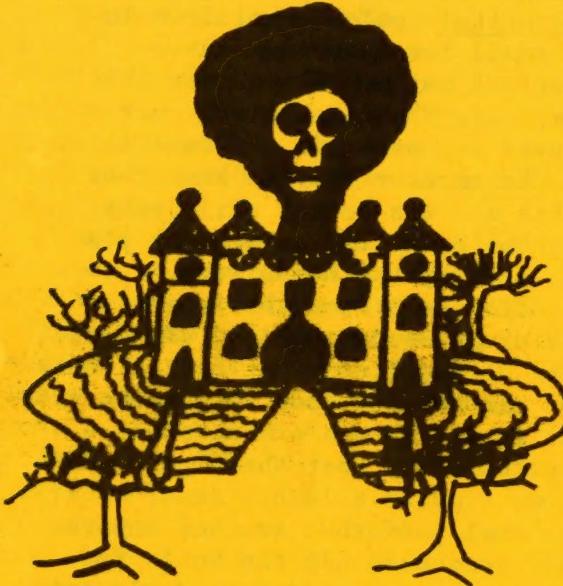
because the imposter so admired the magnificent powder blue velvet sofa in the drawing room. "I know where I can pick up some beautiful koala fur pillows in a small far away country--a perfect match!" said he to the emperor. The emperor was overjoyed and sent him off immediately.

The emperor did not know that this man was really evil, sent by the devil to implement a plan to destroy the human race.

After some time the imposter returned--empty handed, of course, for he had lied about the pillows. He entered the room in a great fit of tears. He was crying so hysterically that the emperor took some time to calm him down. Finally he explained that another emperor had purchased all the koala fur pillows in the boutique declaring that he intended to have the finest castle in the world.

"However," said the imposter, "I have just the thing." He left the room and returned with a large safe and a burglar alarm system. The poor emperor was somewhat puzzled because, vain as he was, his castle had always been accessible to anyone in his land. He had never seen anything like this before. The imposter told him to collect all his architectural designs. He put them in the safe, locked it tightly, hooked up the burglar alarm, and explained to the emperor that it would emit a piercing alarm to alert the emperor and frighten off intruders.

The emperor was still confused, but quickly forgot the problem when the imposter told him that he knew of an oil painting which would be exquisite over the fireplace. The emperor sent him off



and sat on his antique peacock chair to read House Beautiful magazine.

Days passed. The imposter returned. He had no oil painting. Instead, he was dragging a cannon. The emperor stood aghast. Before he could speak, the imposter explained breathlessly that the painting had been sold to a queen who had decided that her castle must be the most beautiful in the world.

"Now we have two enemies to protect ourselves against!! We must add to our protection." The emperor was still baffled, but since he was new at being

suspicious he took the words of the imposter to heart.

In the meantime, he sent the imposter on a new mission. "I'm so tired of my bathroom fixtures--go, get the best in the land." So off went the devil's messenger.

When he returned several weeks later, he feigned a look of terror.

"Don't tell me!!" said the emperor. "The bathroom fixtures were all sold out?"

"Not only that, Mr. Emperor," said the imposter, "but all the kings, queens and emperors in the land have decided to arm their castles to protect their decorations! But never fear! I am here! I managed to obtain a few powerful weapons. I have a Trident submarine which has 204 nuclear warheads and is not only a deterrent but has first-strike capabilities. I've already put it in the moat.

"And I have a B-52 bomber for an air launch and several assortments of land-to-surface cruise missiles that we can bury underground. All have nuclear warhead flexibilities that will make ours not only the most beautiful castle in the world, but the best armed as well."

By now the emperor was finding the power game quite fun. He called all the people to an open house to see his new adornments. The people came from far and wide for they were very curious. They stood around viewing the weapons and the imposter explained that they would destroy everything in their path by fire, by blast and by radiation.

Suddenly a gasp came from the

crowd. "If they destroy everything, that means that the castle will be destroyed too!"

The emperor almost fainted! He sent the imposter off immediately to tackle the problem.

After a few days the imposter returned with a small weapon called the neutron bomb.

"Never fear, I am here! This little item will destroy civilians, demoralize the enemy, but the castle will remain unharmed!"

The emperor jumped with glee, and called all the people again. The imposter exalted the wonders of the neutron bomb.

Then an old man asked "You mean this thing kills people but leaves property unharmed?"

"That's right!" said the imposter. "Aren't you willing to risk your life, just your life (and that of everyone else) to save the most elegant castle in the world? What is your life in comparison to this beauty?

The people nodded in confused agreement, for they did not want to lose their castle.

And the imposter chuckled with glee, because the devil's plan to destroy the world had worked.

"The Emperor's New Weapon" was first presented as part of the neutron bomb demonstration accompanying President Carter's visit to Des Moines. The Magic Box Mime Troupe would like to perform the skit to other appropriate audiences, especially to younger audiences. For more information, contact the Worker House.

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to them as brothers and sisters, there is no way we can justify blowing them off the face of the earth in a so-called "Just War."

Jesus' question "Who do you say that I am?" is a journey and all of us are called to go on it. It is a real journey that carries with it all the responsibilities of any true relationship. We must try to meet our brothers and sisters in the truth of their beings and begin to act responsibly toward them--not as commodities to be exploited but as persons to be loved.

--Frank Cordaro



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happening? It's hard to remember. People come and go, things get good, things seem bad, neutron bombs, staff meetings. Things are o.k. Take the sour with the sweet, they say, but who knows the difference?

On writing these thoughts I can't help but feel lonely. Sitting under a bridge on the river in downtown Des Moines, the trains roll overhead and the cold rain falls, and once again, it's me under the shelter.

I've found my peace.  
Amen.

--Ed Polich

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To oppose war

There are so many who hate war and who are opposed to peacetime conscription who do not know what they can do, who have no sense of united effort, and who will sit back and accept with resignation the evils which are imposed upon us. This is not working for God's will to be done on earth as it is in Heaven. This is accepting the evils in the world as inevitable and looking toward Heaven as a haven, a "pie in the sky" attitude. God did not make the evils, but man in his misuse of his free will.

--Dorothy Day

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